MUVVER AND ME

by

ROBERT LIVINGSTON

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MUVVER AND ME

Roger Livingston Seaife

MUVVER AND ME

Old-fashioned Rhymes For new-fangled Kiddies

BY

ROBERT LIVINGSTON

WITH PICTURES AND DECORATIONS BY

MILO WINTER

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No. 1,

DEDICATION

To mothers who with love and care
Create the children's world so fair

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MY LITTLE BRUVVER

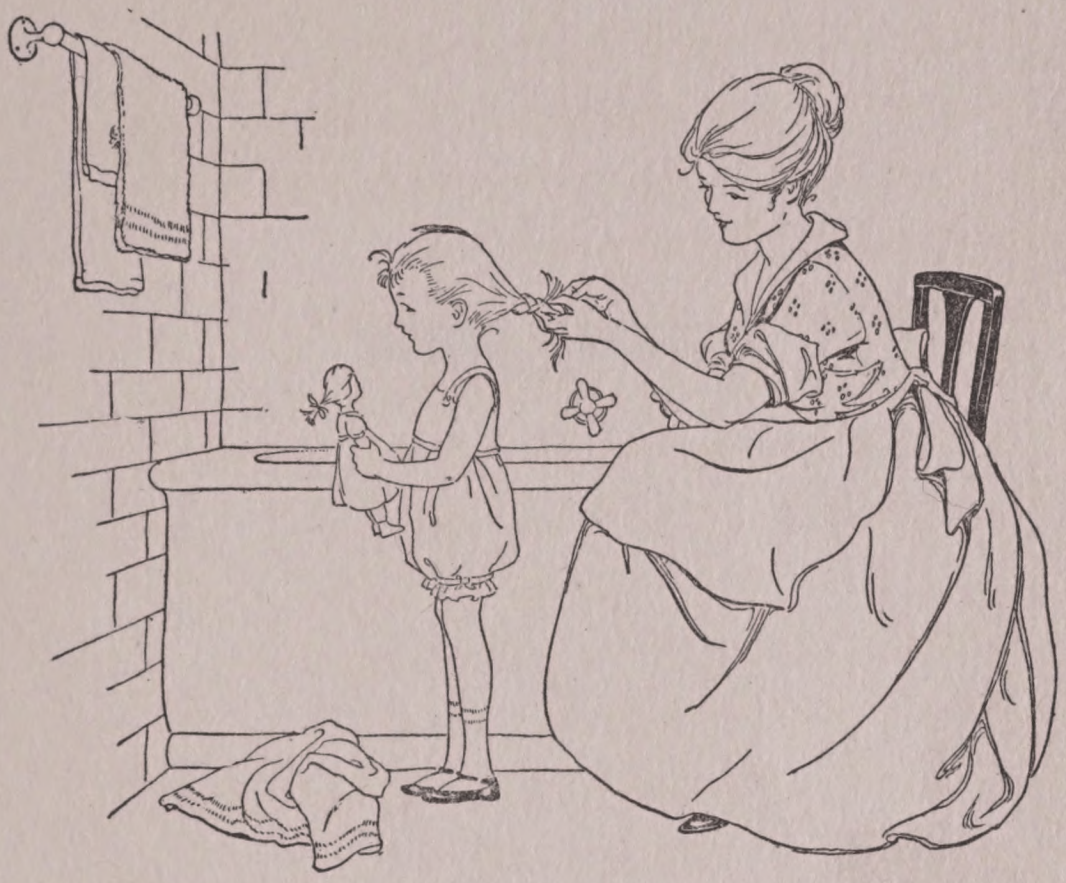
My Bruvver is a little tot,
He cannot even walk,
And though he crows and coos and cries,
I've never heard him talk.
And yet my Muvver said to me, —
I know it must be so, —
That I was just as small, myself,
Not many years ago.

MORNING DUTIES

Morning Duties

WHEN I get up I take a bath,
And scrub my hands and nails,
And then my Muvver braids my hair,
In two long brown pigtails.
She fastens up my dress behind,
Makes sure that I am neat,
And then we scurry down the stairs,
Our breakfast promptly eat.

With Gwendolyn I do the same,—
She is my doll, you see.
She needs my care most all the time,
She's all the world to me.
And so I dress and braid her hair,
And keep her by my side;
When Muvver's friends come here to call,
I show her off with pride.



NURSE BRIDGET

Nurse Bridget

My nurse's name is Bridget, —
At least that's all I know, —
She keeps Muvver in a fidget
Because she is so slow.
She's old and gray and grumpy,
She has always been that way,
But Muvver won't discharge her,
So I s'pose she'll have to stay.
She tells me fairy stories,
But she never mends a sock,
She goes to church on Sunday
Just as reg'lar as a clock.
She scolds the maid Miranda
And gossips with the cook,
She sits on our veranda
So that she may have a look
At Billy, our new postman,
Or whoever's going by,
She's kind to me most always
And she never makes me cry.
But she's not the same as Muvver,
No one could be that to me,
And although I love her sometimes,
All her faults I plainly see.

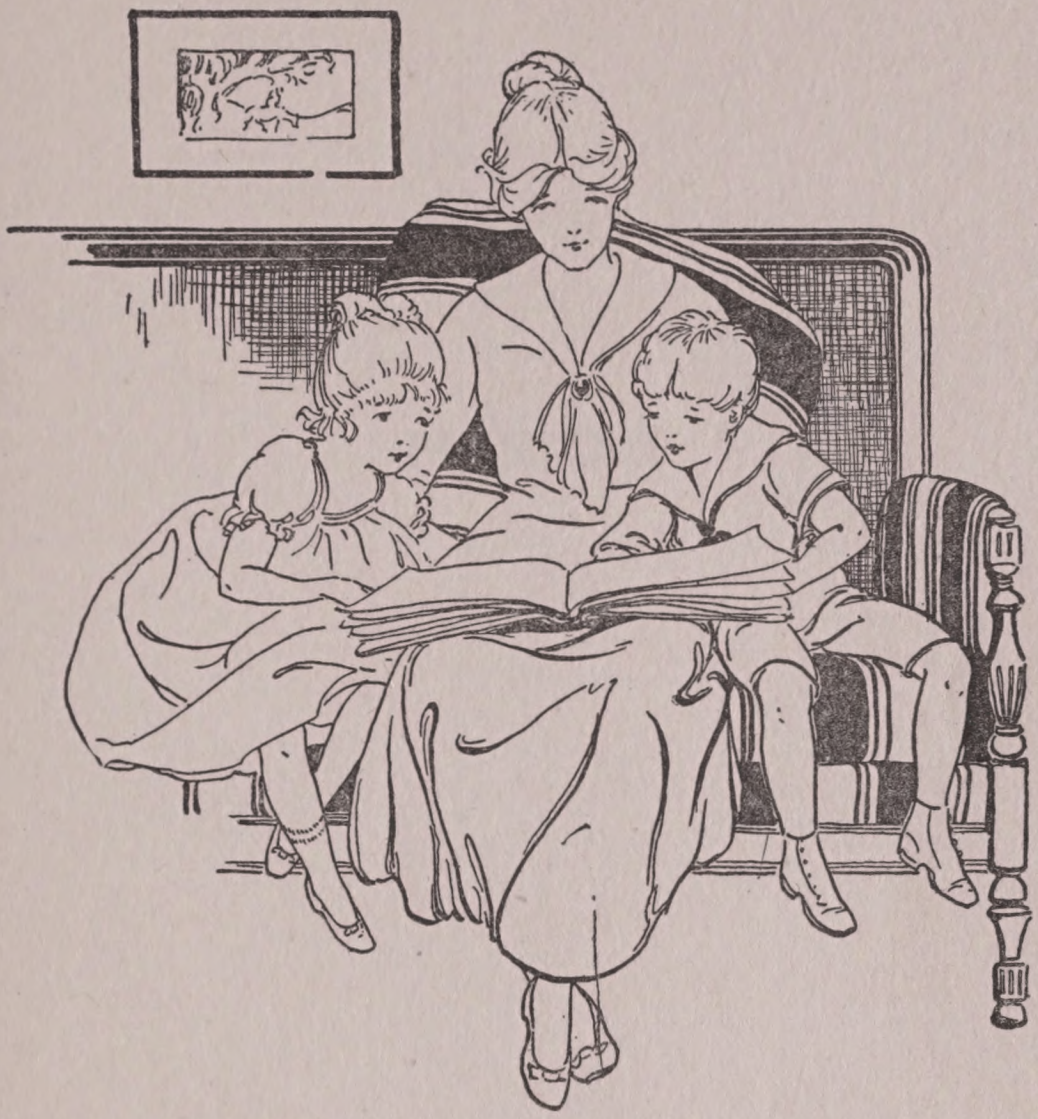
EARACHE

Earache

I DON'T know why
I want to cry,
With Muvver
Always sitting by.
But how the pain
Comes back again,
And wishing seems
To be in vain.
It is my ear
And every tear
Just makes the aching
More severe.
But yet I know
The pain would grow
If she stopped rocking
To and fro.
It's worse at night,
Without a light,
I want her then,
With all my might.

SUNSET

THE time of day I like the best,
Is when the sun has set;
And we have had our supper, but
It is not dark as yet.
We gather round our Muvver, as
She sits with book in hand,
And reads to us about King Cole,
Bold Robin and his band,
Brer Rabbit, Peter Pan and Kim,
Young David, with his sling,
And Puss in Boots and Alice, too,—
What joys these stories bring.



PLANTING

Planting

The sky is blue and soft to-day,
The grass is green this month of May,
And Muvver with her spade and rake
My little garden helps me make;
For every one must plant more seeds
To grow the food that each one needs:
Potatoes, corn, green peas, and beets,
The kind of beans that sister eats.
We plant in rows marked by a string,
For neatness is the one great thing;
The earth is then raked smooth and pressed
And Nature tends to all the rest.
I hope the plants will soon appear
Or else they'll die, I greatly fear.

OUR COOK

Our Cook

I LOVE to see the cook make pies,
And cut the doughnuts out like eyes,
And slice the bread to make the toast,
And set the chicken in to roast.

I like to help her shell the peas,
I do it with the greatest ease,
And roll the dough out on the board,
And see where everything is stored.

When autumn comes, we make thick jam,
Preserves, grape jelly for the lamb,
And pickled peaches rich with spice —
Cook lets me taste them once or twice.

Our Muvver says we must not stay
To be a bother in cook's way,
We must not taste of every sweet,
They're kept so we may have a treat.

SUNDAY

Sundays

My Muvver told me long ago
That Sunday is a day of rest,
When children must not shout and play,
But always do what parents say,
And dress in all their best.

I always go to Sunday School
I like to hear the stories read
Of Joseph's coat and David's sling,
The Wise Men and the gifts they bring,
And all that Moses said.

We sing the hymns we children know,
"While shepherds watched their flocks by
night,"
And then go home to Muvver dear,
Who always says she likes to hear
Me sing with all my might.

HIDE AND SEEK

Hide and Seek

WHAT fun it is to play at hide,
I feel quite giggly all inside,
While peeking from behind the door
At Muvver crawling on the floor,
To see if I am here or there,
Behind the desk or 'neath a chair,
And then at last, when she finds out,
My, you should hear us laugh and shout!

PRACTICING

Practicing

ONE and two and here I go,
Playing on the pi-an-o;
Muvver counting by my side,
As the scale of G I tried.
If I strike a wrong black key —
It never fails to bother me;
Though I do not play so well,
False notes I can always tell.
Muvver makes me practice hard,
Instead of playing in the yard,
So when I am a great big boy
My music you will all enjoy.

HOME

Home

Our house is hidden by a hedge
And guarded by big trees,
It's white and long, and low and snug.
When winter comes to freeze
The pond we see across the road,
The moisture on the pane;
The snow and ice are piled high up
Upon our country lane.

I find it very hard to stand,
I slip and sometimes fall;
But then it does not count with me,
You see, I am not tall.
And if by chance I go to walk,
My Muvver's always there.
I hold her hand, and she holds mine,
Together we take care.

A WISH

A Wish

I LIE awake sometimes at night,
And wish and wish with all my might
That I could read and write and spell
The way that Muvver does so well.

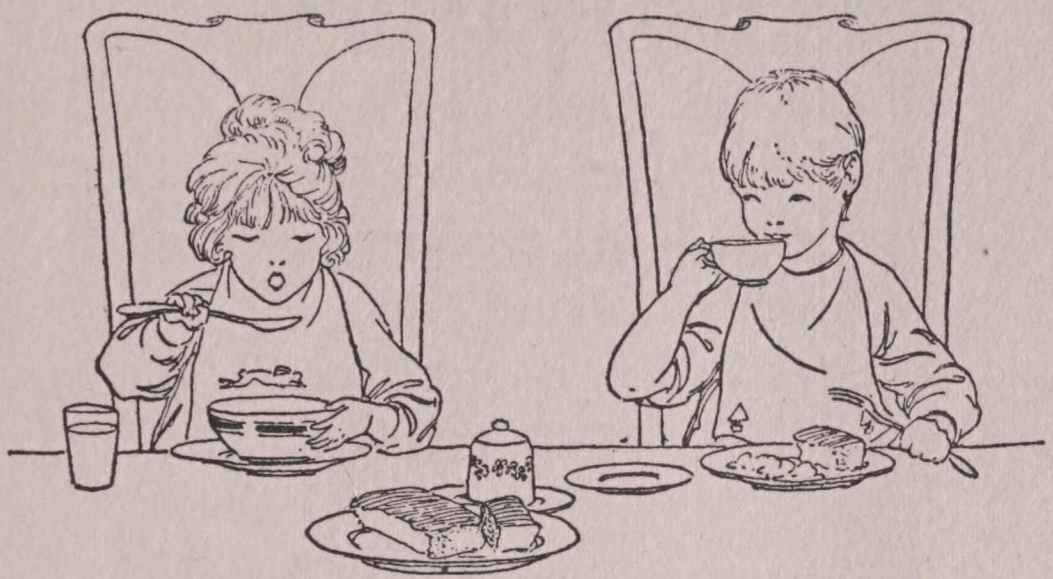
We sit together with a book,
And while she reads, I take a look
At all the black things written there,
But all I do is stare and stare.

GOODIES TO EAT

WHAT can be more delicious
Than a breakfast steaming hot
Of oatmeal, cream and sugar,
With sweet cocoa in a pot,
And scrambled eggs and cornbread,
With marmalade or jam,
And fruit when it's in season?
I like breakfast quite a lot.

When home we come from lessons,
My! how good our dinners taste!
Hot soup and meat, potatoes,
Beans, we eat with childish haste.
We scrape our plates quite shiny
And wait for our dessert
Of pudding, jelly, pie, or cake —
There's not a speck we waste.

By half-past five we're tired,
So we hurry home for tea,
To find our Muvver waiting
For small sister and for me.



Our bread and milk and porridge,
Prunes and cookies disappear,
And though perhaps we're greedy,
Eating 's fun, you'll all agree.

MUVVER 'S SEWING

NEEDLE and thread,
Needle and thread,
Muvver is sewing
While I am in bed;
Mending so neat
The white socks for my feet,
My shirts and my trousers
And cap for my head.

Cutting and basting,
Now down on her knees,
Muvver is putting
A dress on Louise.
She sews and she sings
As she makes pretty things
For her dear little children
She so likes to please.

Worsted to knit,
Worsted to knit,
Mittens and sweaters
That all seem to fit;

Muvver 's Sewing

Humming and rocking
While knitting a stocking,
While sister and I wind
The yarn bit by bit.

DANCING–SCHOOL

Dancing-School

Each Monday afternoon at three
We go to dancing-class;
In shirt and collar spotless white,
Blue coat and trousers rather tight,
And pumps that pinch, alas!

The teacher stands in front of us,
And steps from left to right,
Her nimble feet go to and fro,
They take her where she wants to go, —
She is a graceful sight.

We follow her as best we may,
While counting one, two, three,
Waltzing around upon our toes,
Dancing and turning in two rows,
So all who wish may see.

Of course we dance with little girls,
That is the thing to do.
We bow and then they curtsy low,
And arm in arm we walk quite slow, —
That's part of dancing, too.

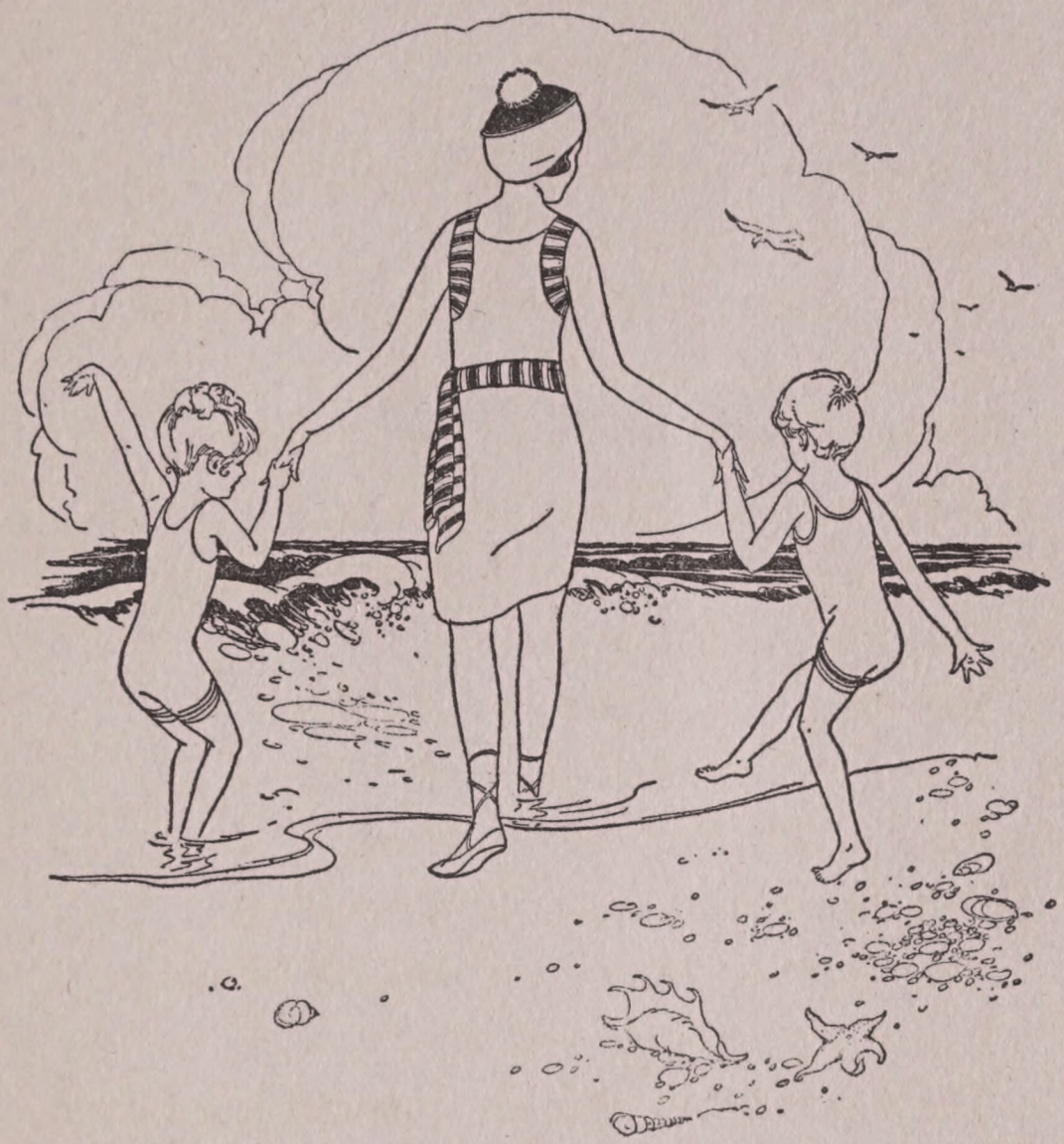
Dancing-School

Our Muvvers sit along the wall,
And watch as we go by.
They smile if we are doing well,
Our missteps from their frown we tell,
I do not know just why.

BATHING

Bathing

I CANNOT swim or float or dive,
But I am brave as brave;
When Muvver takes me by the hand
We walk to meet the wave,
Which rolls to us from far at sea
With mighty crest and roar,
And lands upon our shining beach
A ripple, nothing more.
Yet even when the sea is calm
The water makes me feel
As if I'd rather be on shore;
But Muvver makes me kneel,
And then lie down and splash about;
I lose my breath and cry,
Then scramble quickly toward the beach,
Where Muvver's standing by.



GOOD BEHAVIOR

Good Behavior

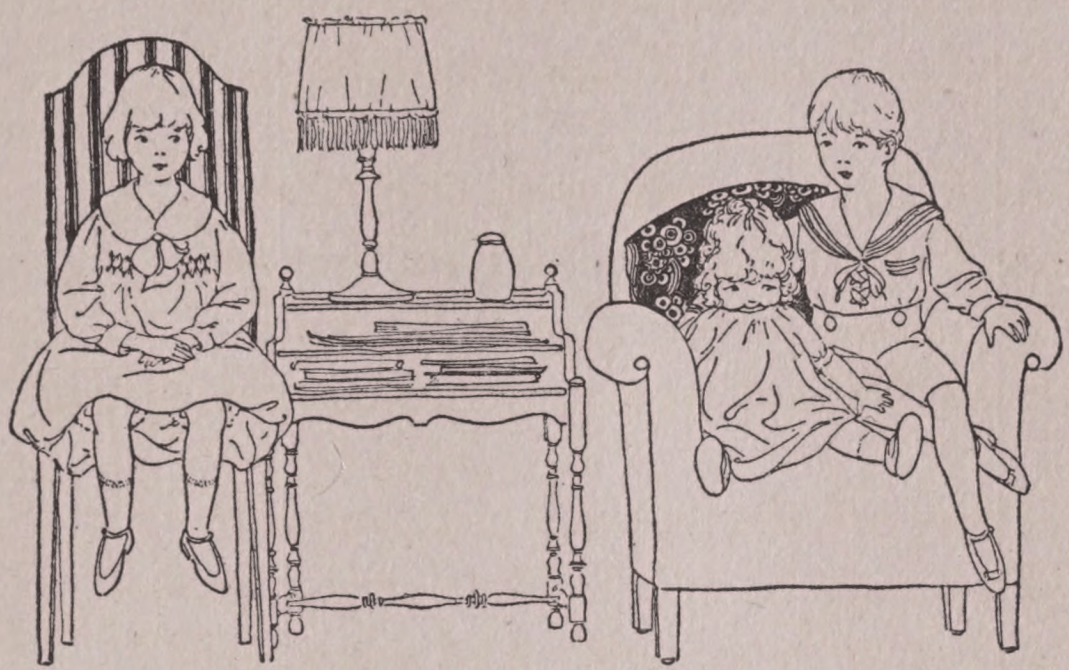
WHEN grown-up people come to call
It is a lesson for us all,
For we are told to go downstairs,
And sit quite still upon our chairs.

At first we go and greet our guest,
And shake her hand like all the rest,
My sister curtsies, bends her knee,
Says, "Thank you, will you have some tea?"

These are the answers that you say
To questions asked most every day, —
"How are you, well? And sister, too?"
"Come and see me;" "How do you do?"

Our Muvver makes us wash our hands,
And brush our hair, and tie our bands,
She sees that every nail is clean
Before our callers can be seen.

She makes us walk with manly tread,
Our heads erect and eyes ahead,
And speak in modulated voice, —
These things our Muvver's heart rejoice.



THE BAD BOY

The Bad Boy

THERE is a boy —
He lives near by —
Who tries to tease
And make me cry.

He says bad words,
He's rude and rough,
Gives me a kick
And then a cuff.

He's big and strong,
And tries to cheat
In games we play
Upon the street.

One day last week
He hurt me so
That from our house
I hate to go.

But Muvver says
I must be brave,
And like a man
I should behave.

The Bad Boy

If he hits me
I must hit back,
And scare him
With a mighty whack.

Now, when to-day
We went to school
He knocked me down
And shouted, "Fool!"

I was afraid,
But up I rose
And hit him square
Upon the nose.

PUNISHMENT

Punishment

Last night I cried and cried and cried
Until I felt all lame inside,
  My pillow wet with salty tears,
My mind tormented by my fears
  Of punishment to come.

  For I had been a naughty boy,
In anger broken Bruvver's toy.
  When he had wanted it himself,
I'd put it on the high top shelf;
  From there it tumbled down.

  The nurse had sent me up to bed
To wait till Muvver came, she said,
  And there I toss'd and turned and thought
Of all the havoc I had wrought,
  And what would Muvver say?

  At last she came with saddened face
To learn just what had taken place.
  I told her all that I had done
And said I was a naughty son,
  But sorry as could be.

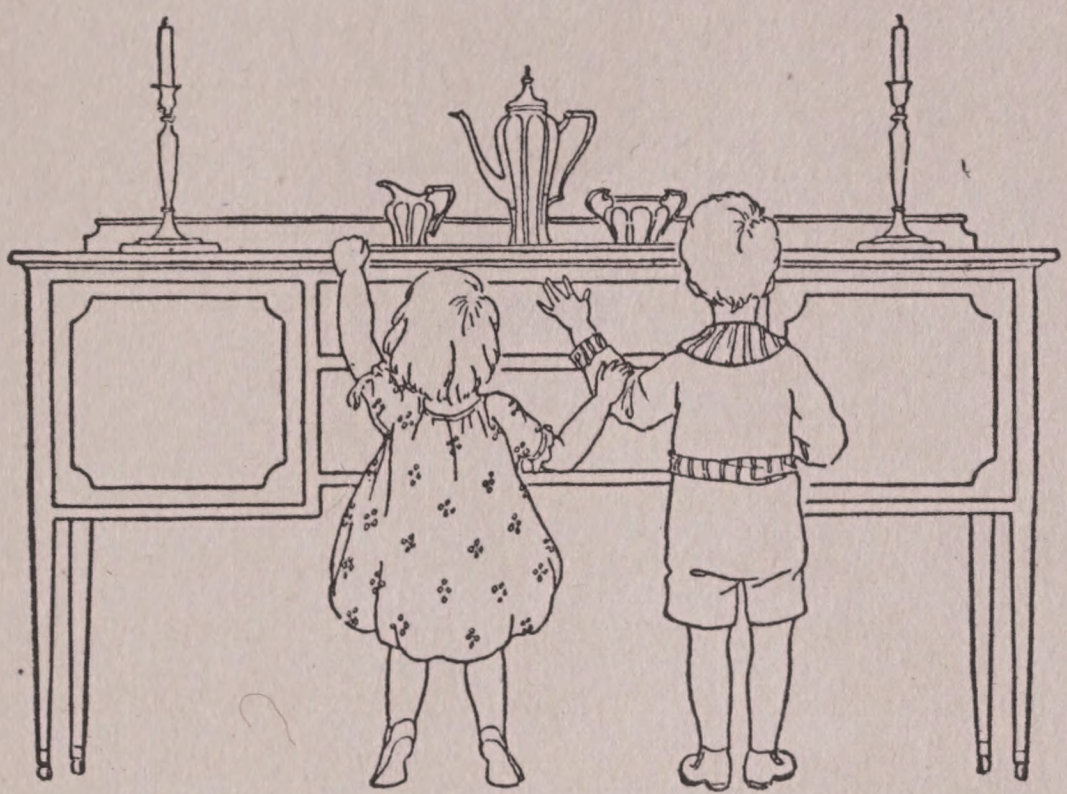
Punishment

No supper did I have that night —
Of course what Muvver said was right.
I took my pennies one by one,
Paid for the damage I had done,
And asked forgiveness too.

NEATNESS

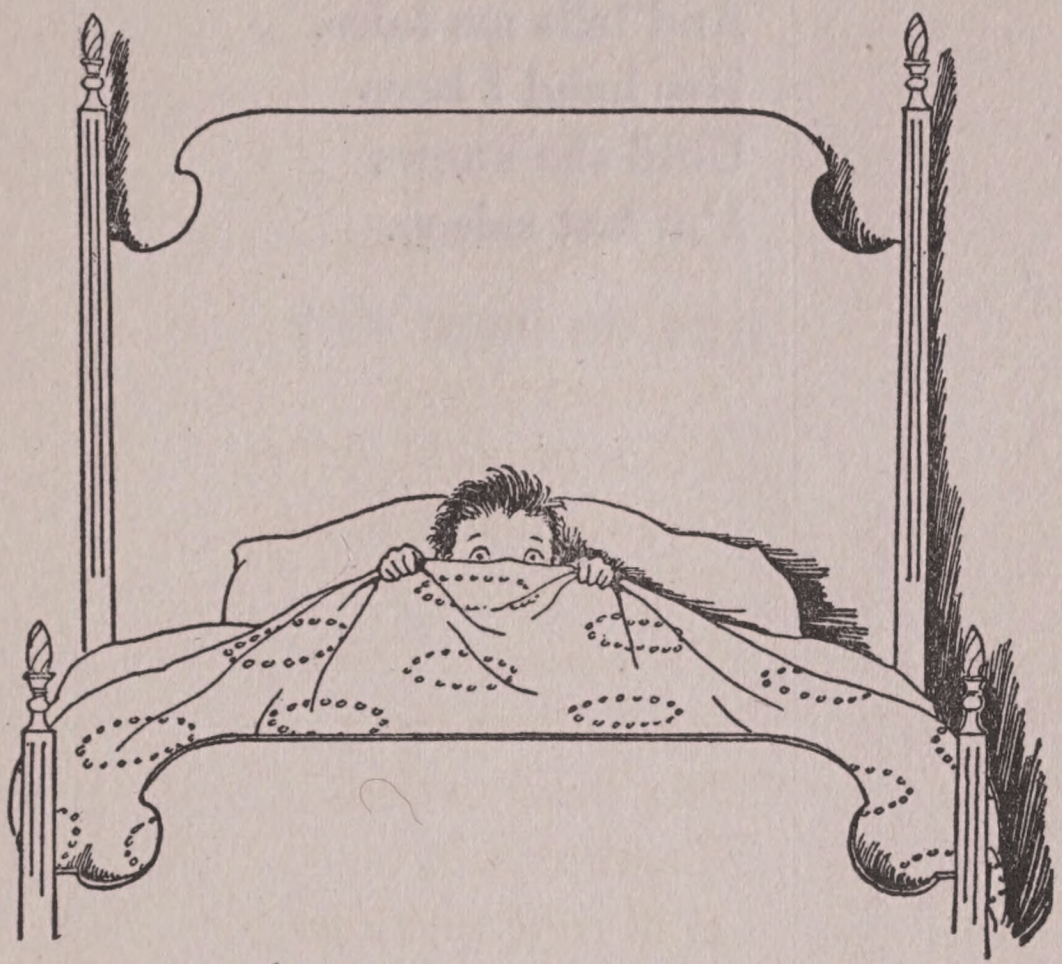
Neatness

Our house from top to bottom
Is as neat as neat can be,
From the cellar with its coal bin
To the attic 'neath the tree.
Every table, chair, and bookshelf
Is quite free from dirt and dust;
Not a knife or pan or spider
Has a single speck of rust.
All the linen is quite spotless,
And the silver shines so bright,
You can see it on the sideboard
When we've turned out every light.
Every suit is pressed and folded
Or else hung upon a hook:
Not a thing is out of order,
Not an unforgotten nook
Will disclose a flaw in Muvver
Who, as housekeeper and wife,
Says a home in perfect order
Is the joy of simple life.



NIGHT

When I'm in bed
And all is dark,
I sometimes hear
The doggies bark.
I often think
A shadow gray
From near the door
Crawls fast this way.
I hide myself
Beneath the sheet
And shiver from
My head to feet,
Until at last,
Still cold with fear,
I lift my head
And only hear
My Muvver's voice,
So sweet and low —
"Are you asleep?"
She wants to know.
I tell her then
My dread of night,



And she to please
Turns on the light,
And tells me tales.
Her hand I keep
Until she knows
I'm fast asleep.

THE BEST OF FUN

We have a great big motor-car
That Daddy likes to run,
We go on Sundays here and there
And think it's lots of fun.

But better still we like the train,
Which takes us into town,
When Muvver goes from store to store
To buy a hat or gown.

And best of all the trolley-car,
The open ones in spring.
To ride in these with Muvver dear
To me beats everything.

WHEN MUVVER 'S ILL

When Muvver's Ill

I DON'T know what to do,
My thoughts are very blue;
I roam about, now here, now there,
I sit awhile in Muvver's chair,
But nothing seems quite right.

Our house is very still,
For Muvver is quite ill;
My Daddy is at home to-day.
He told us that we must not play,
And nothing seems quite right.

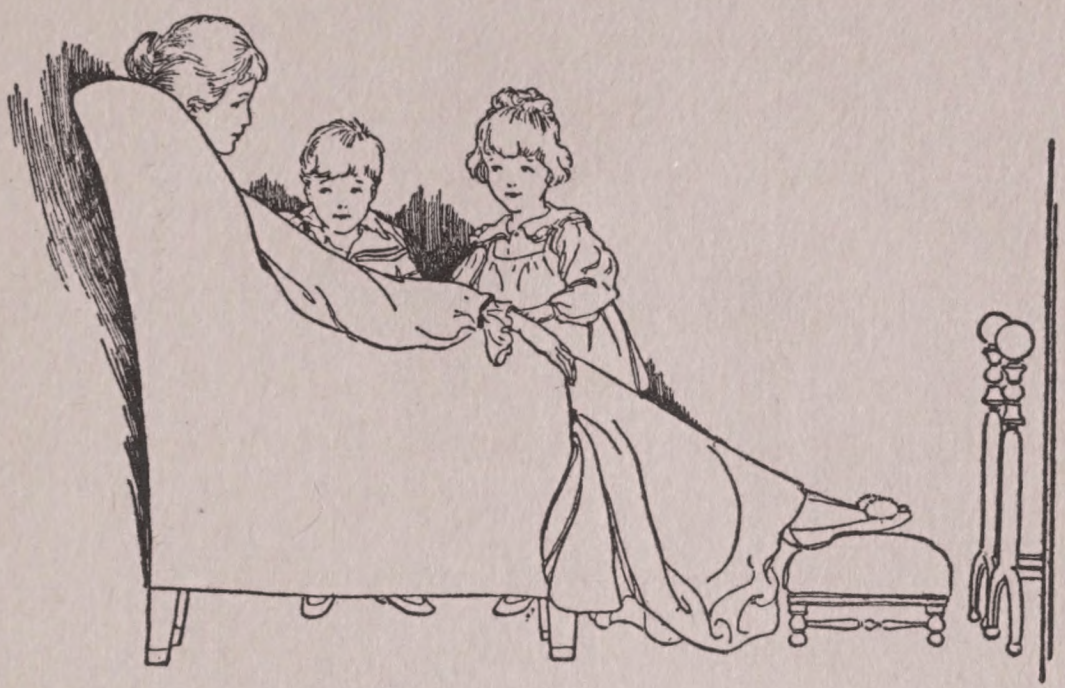
A nurse all dressed in white
Keeps Muvver's door shut tight.
The doctor comes and sometimes brings
Another man with bags and things
That do not smell quite right.

It seems a long, long while
Since I saw Daddy smile.
One morning when the sun shone clear
He came downstairs and said, "My dear,
Thank God with all your might."

MUVVER'S WELL AGAIN

To-day I am so happy
I can only shout and sing,
No small boy could keep quiet,
Or for long do anything.
For Muvver's had an illness;
She had to have a nurse
And medicines and doctors —
It could not have been worse.

But now she is much better,
And she's coming down to-day
To sit beside our fire,
And the nurse says we may stay.
That's why I'm so excited,
Why I don't know what to do,
And if she were *your* Muvver,
You would feel the same way too.



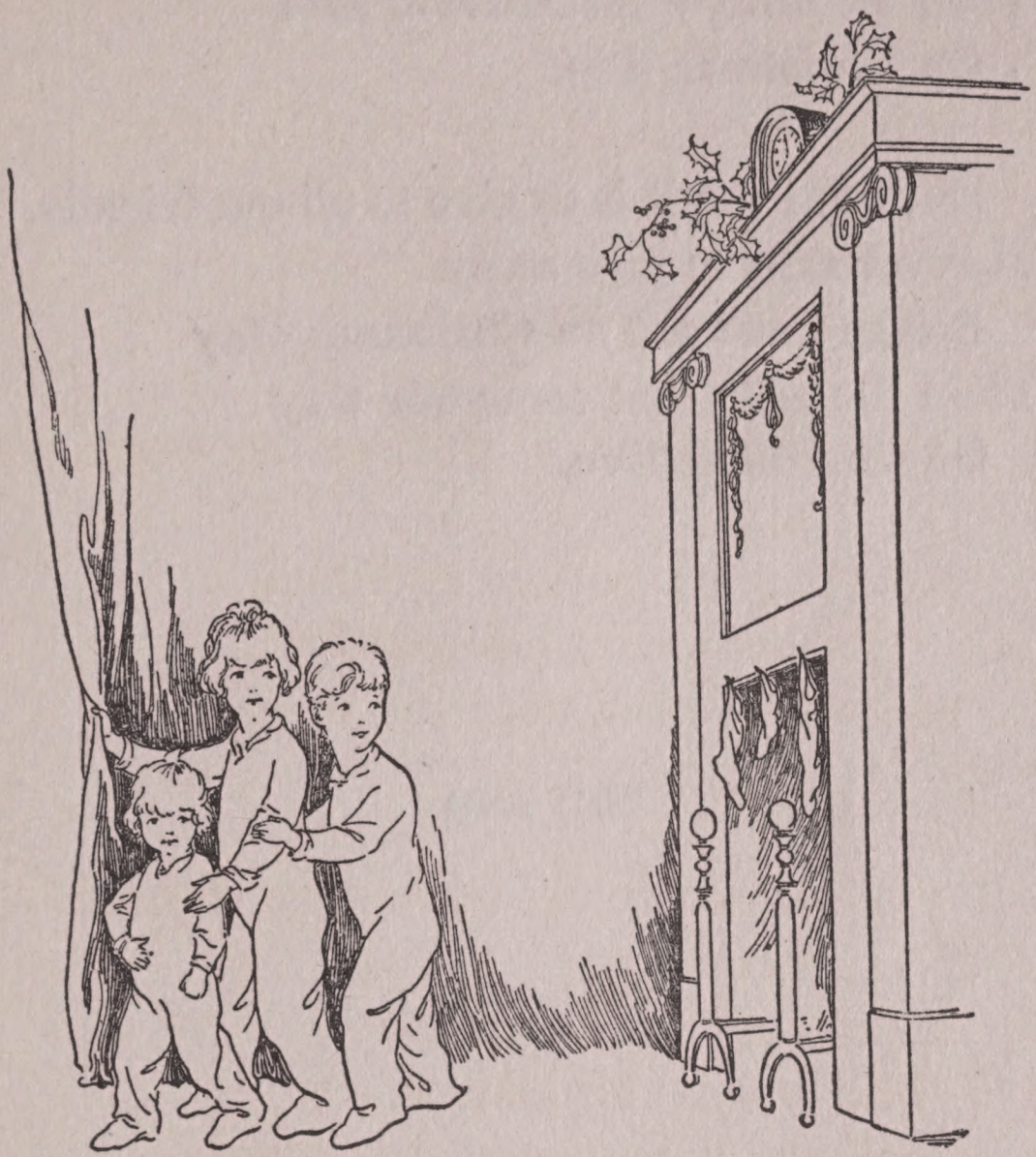
ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Oh, what fun it is at home on Christmas Eve,
When the ground is white with snow
And the wind starts in to blow!
Santa Claus is near, I know,
On Christmas Eve.

Oh, what fun it is to hang our stockings up;
Now they are so thin and slick,
In the morning bulging thick,
Santa Claus had done the trick
On Christmas Eve.

Oh, what fun our secrets are with Muvver dear,
Making gifts for every one —
"Daddy from his little son" —
Cook and nurse, forgetting none
On Christmas Eve.

Oh, what fun it is to tie the bundles up,
Paper white and ribbon red,
Sometimes we use green instead,



Then we print what Muvver said
On Christmas Eve.

Oh, what fun it is to give to all our friends.
Muvver says to give away
Brings more joy on Christmas Day
Than the gifts that come our way
On Christmas Eve.

THE END

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